

Congresswoman Kaptur announced a \$30 million boost to upgrade and replace engines at the Toledo-based 180th Air National Guard Fighter Wing.

"This is an investment in the future of the 180th in Toledo as the most modern fighter wing in America," said Congresswoman Kaptur, a member of the influential House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee. The funding was approved by the subcommittee in the Fiscal Year 2010 defense appropriations bill.

Due to periodic efforts by the Defense Department to downsize bases (a process known at the Base Realignment and Closure process, or BRAC), Rep. Kaptur made full funding of all engine replacements at the 180th base her top committee priority in this fiscal year. The funding will complete installation of 18 engines in F-16 fighter jets.

"Bringing the base to full operational preparedness with the most up to date engines is an investment in the base's competitiveness in future BRAC processes," Kaptur said.

Jets from the 180th Fighter Wing were deployed in the Iraq War in 2005 and 2007. Personnel from the Fighter Wing continue to rotate on missions in the current wars in the Middle East.

Kaptur said the engine upgrade program provides a cost-effective method of upgrading fighter performance at a fraction of the cost of new aircraft. It also provides a 20 percent improvement in jet thrust and improved performance. This new investment will complete engine replacement process years ahead of schedule and will augment a previously slow moving effort that was hampered by a lack of funding.

The new Pratt & Whitney 229 engines provide immediate improved combat capability to the F-16s' existing Block 42 engines. Each engine costs approximately \$5.5 million. Kaptur had previously secured incremental funding for the engine program of about \$12 million a year in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

"The 180th Toledo Fighter Wing is a model unit for Air National Guard modernization. It is the most modern base in Ohio. With forward thinking Guard leadership, it has been an honor to assist the unit in its important efforts to modernize and to steadily improve its operational capabilities, delivering \$80 million in base investments over the last ten years," Kaptur said.

The unit consists of several support functions, including security forces, engineering, communications, aircraft maintenance, food services, transportation, human resources and medics. More than 1,000 people are employed by the unit, which is estimated to contribute \$85 million in payroll and local purchases to the local economy annually.



180th Fighter Wing Kaptur Discusses the Importance of the